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Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI) — PROGA Act 2025 and India's New Gaming Regulatory Framework

25 April 2026

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Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI) — PROGA Act 2025 and India's New Gaming Regulatory Framework

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WHY IN NEWS

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**) notified the **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026** on **April 22, 2026**, establishing the **Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI)** — operational from **May 1, 2026**. OGAI is constituted under the **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming (PROGA) Act, 2025**, which provides India's first unified statutory framework for the online gaming sector, covering e-sports, skill-based games, social games, and real-money games.

BACKGROUND — WHY DID INDIA NEED THIS?

Scale of India's Online Gaming Industry

INDICATOR	DATA
Market size (2025-26)	~₹28,000 crore+
Users	~500 million+ online gamers (casual + core)
Growth rate	15-20% annually
E-sports	~100 million participants; growing international competitiveness
Real-money gaming	Fantasy sports (Dream11, MPL) + card games (Rummy, Poker)

Regulatory Vacuum (Pre-PROGA)

Before the PROGA Act, online gaming was regulated by a patchwork:

- **IT Act, 2000** — general internet rules; no gaming-specific provisions
- **State laws** — some states banned certain real-money games; inconsistent across states
- **MeitY's 2023 amendments** to IT Rules — interim framework; self-regulatory organisations (SROs); criticised for conflict of interest

- No single authority to adjudicate disputes, certify games, or monitor compliance nationally

PROGA ACT, 2025 — KEY PROVISIONS

FEATURE	DETAIL
Central authority	OGAI — national body; replaces SRO framework
Scope	All online games: e-sports, casual, social, real-money
Registration	Mandatory for e-sports (above revenue/user thresholds); optional for non-monetary social games
Real-money gaming	Regulated; must distinguish skill-based (permitted) from chance-based gambling (restricted)
User protection	Age verification, spending limits, grievance redressal, data privacy
Minors	Strict age gates; no real-money participation below 18
Advertising	Restrictions on advertising real-money games to minors; mandatory disclaimers
GST	Real-money online gaming: 28% GST on full face value (since Oct 2023 amendment)

OGAI — STRUCTURE AND POWERS

Composition

ROLE	OFFICER
Chairperson	Additional Secretary, MeitY
Members	Senior officials from MHA, Finance, I&B, Youth Affairs & Sports, Law & Justice
Advisory panel	Gaming industry representatives, consumer bodies, child safety experts

Functions

- 1 **Registration** — certify and register online games meeting eligibility criteria
- 2 **Monitoring** — ongoing compliance monitoring; periodic audits
- 3 **User safety** — issue directions on data retention, cyber security, financial transaction safeguards
- 4 **E-sports** — national e-sports policy implementation; team India selection support

- 5 **Grievance redressal** — appellate body for user complaints
- 6 **Enforcement** — power to direct delisting of non-compliant games; penalties

SKILL VS CHANCE — THE CRITICAL DISTINCTION

In Indian law, **wagering** (gambling on pure chance) is not permissible; **skill-based gaming** (where outcomes depend substantially on skill) is constitutionally protected under Article 19(1)(g) (right to profession/business).

CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	REGULATION
Chess, carrom online	Skill-based	Permitted
Fantasy sports (cricket/football)	Skill-based (SC upheld)	Permitted; OGAI regulated
Rummy, Poker	Skill-based (courts upheld)	Permitted; regulated
Lottery, slots	Chance-based	State gambling laws apply; restricted
Betting on live sports	Chance-based	Illegal under Public Gambling Act

E-SPORTS — A GROWING DIMENSION

MILESTONE	DETAIL
India e-sports market size	~₹1,500 crore (2026); growing 35% annually
Asian Games 2022 (Hangzhou)	E-sports as demonstration event; India won medals
Olympic E-Sports Games	IOC announced; India preparing national team
PROGA Act	E-sports registration mandatory; national team selection through OGAI framework

UPSC RELEVANCE

Prelims

- PROGA Act: Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025
- OGAI: Online Gaming Authority of India — under MeitY; operational May 1, 2026
- Rules notified: April 22, 2026
- OGAI chair: Additional Secretary, MeitY

- GST on real-money gaming: 28% on full face value (since Oct 2023)
- Skill vs chance distinction: Article 19(1)(g) and gambling jurisprudence

Mains

- “India’s PROGA Act attempts to balance digital innovation with user protection in online gaming. Critically examine.” (GS2/GS3)
- State vs Centre jurisdiction on gambling — constitutional tensions
- E-sports and soft power: India’s emerging role in global gaming

FACTS CORNER

FACT	DETAIL
OGAI	Online Gaming Authority of India
Parent Act	PROGA (Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming) Act, 2025
Rules notified	April 22, 2026
Operational	May 1, 2026
Ministry	MeitY
OGAI Chair	Additional Secretary, MeitY
E-sports	Registration mandatory above thresholds
Non-monetary social games	Registration optional
GST on real-money gaming	28% on full face value (since Oct 2023)
India online gaming market	~₹28,000 crore; 500 million+ users

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